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THE
Heavenly Dykes

Poems by

JUNE E. DOWNEY





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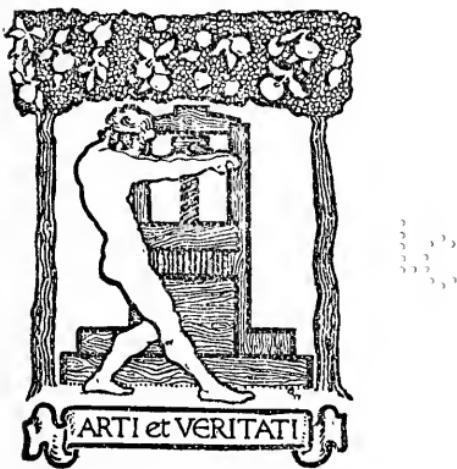
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THE HEAVENLY DYKES

By
JUNE E. DOWNEY



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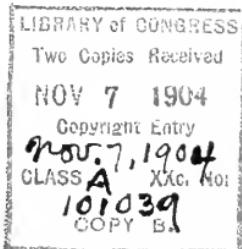
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TO THE MEMORY OF MY FATHER

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THE HEAVENLY DYKES

Brushed by the wings and the winds of the
heavenly ocean;

Banking the billows of song, the azure floods
of the air;

Where sun-tides, ebbing with lingering motion,
Wash thitherward pink-lidded cloud-shells;—
there

Rise the Heavenly Dykes, the skyey dykes,
The tree-dykes, leafy and fair.

Oh, brown-grey tree-trunks laid deep in the turf
Of the low-lying, motherly Island of Earth!

Above and above, I can hear,— I can see

Leaf upon leaf, uncurling, flung free
At the fathomless port of a fathomless sea.

Spirit of Spring, whose swift fingers flashing in
gladness

Builded the tree-dykes, thy secret is told:
Fears lest the earth-heart be smitten with mad-
ness

For the flash of the sun-surf, the flood-tides of
gold.

Yet see! Sweet Spirit, the little pale buds
Are shyly clinging the brown branches to;
See! The delicate chinks of the skyey dykes
Are letting the blue, blue sky-waters through.

Wall deeper the sky-sea ;
Heap higher the barrier ;
Mass tassels of russet, of amber, of grey !
See the long, drooping, fleecy plumes thwart
the green carrier,
See the rose-cones splashed by the misty spray !
Wonderful drifts of apple-bloom snow
Where the blue wave breaks ;
Exquisite pink-sweet masses of peach-blow,
Edging the cloud-flakes !

Beautiful dykes of the heavenly ocean,
Banks where the glad birds sing,
I would I might outpour with them my devotion,
My hymn to the Spring.

SHADOWS

I

The hyacinthine shadows float at eve
Out from the rainbow caverns of the west ;
They fall atremble on the mountain breast,
And in their swooning lovely pallors leave.
The nightly shadows in cool darkness heave
Upon pine cones heaped 'neath the forest-crest ;
Or, paling at the chilly moon's behest,
On alabaster their white imprints weave.
There are, too, shadows of the early hour,
When morn comes forth her dewy bath again ;
And these are veils to hide her radiancy.
Oh, would that poesy come to perfect flower !
For e'en the faery joy of shadows pain,
While thus their winged beauty fleeth me.

II

Strange shadows float, too, in the spirit-world ;
Quaint, unsubstantial as a woe foretold ;
And some are arabesque of mauve and gold ;
And some blue gossamer sky-wings have un-
furled ;
Some are as faint as gauze leaves newly whorled
Around the stamen when the buds unfold ;
And some are ebon black and bitter cold,
Whose heavy chill upon the soul lies curled.
Faint dreams, dim hopes, that vanish in the sun ;
Broad darkness fallen on some mount or
stream ;
Gray fancies by some open tomb revealed ; —
They haunt me so, these shadows, I am won
To dip my pen into their misty beam,
And trace a shadow's shade by lines con-
cealed.

FIRST SORROW

As poignant as first Love. Pilot o'er seas
Tumultuous, uncharted as Love's own ;
Where we embark nor know the distant port
Whither our Pilot steers us; know alone
That Love's free needle points unto the Dawn,
And Sorrow's sails are set for twilight realms
Of the far West. Most dim is Sorrow's sea ;
Grey with the mist of tears and visited
By sobbing sea-winds, broken-wingèd birds ;
Haunted by grieving phantoms unpeased,
Who, in the long sad watches of the night,
Set ringing melancholy changes on
Unquiet bells, wild bells, innumerable.

From that untold far voyage we return
Never the same. Our eyes forevermore
Are filled with twilight; evermore we hear
The moan of waters, clang of mournful bells.
E'en as Love's voyagers but newly come
From sailing the auroral seas, awhile
We walk apart with slow uncertain step ;
Earth-strangers, alien to her ways, who know
No word of her uncouth, unloving speech ;
Reluctant to renew old energies.

Yea, there are times in the long after-years
When we would flee the crowded streets, the
press
Unfriendly of indifferent multitudes ;
We fain would step aboard the shadowy ship ;
Fain see again the far mysterious grey
Of heaving billows ; fain would share again
The perfect quiet of a ghost forlorn.
But not again may we embark ; but once
The pale-faced Pilot bids us sail with him ;
But once, and not again, — his strong decree
Who is inexorable as Love, the stern.

IN RETREAT

Dear dumb brute things, I love you so,
Because I, too, am dumb; I gaze
Sad eye to eye, nor find amaze,
Nor startled shudder at my woe;
And if I brush you rudely with my skirt,
From sunward turning for the blinding blaze,
 You are not hurt.

Oh, perfect sympathy that broods
O'er sorrow, till akin it glides
Through secret of its broken moods!
O Nature's children of pathetic eyes,
 How wise
The lowly wisdom of the loving eyes!

I love you, great strong ancient trees!
I cannot pray, but watch instead
Those skyward tensions overhead,
Which more avail than bended knees.
I lean my head on some gray trunk with moan
To feel the cool leaves that its bounties shed.
 I am alone.

Oh, comfort of the green embrace,
And leaf-kiss for the starvèd soul;
Great tenderness and saintly grace!
Ye priests of Nature of no slavish stole,
 Nor dole
Of human harshness; thine the heavenly stole!

I love you, timid birds that flee,
Bronze flashes through the sentinel grass;
And you, transparent flowers, that pass
The liquid sunlights on to me.

I love thee, Nature ; aye, it doth avail
To love the whole of thee. No fears harass
 Of scourging flail.
Soft comforts for thine erring child ;
Swift pardons for her stumbling feet,
For she was by the world beguiled !
But fain would hasten now to thy retreat ;
 Oh, sweet
The loving silence of that dear retreat !

ANGEL OF MUSIC

I

Thou Angel of Music, with wistful eye,
Passionate-hearted and silver-veined ;
Thou Stranger-Angel, reluctant and shy,
Hardly won by the mortal cry ;
Whose skyey pinions are white, are frail ;
Whose arched foot shines on a planet's trail ;
One spirit-hand in God's at rest,
One athrob on man's hot breast !
Angel of Music, we sink to thee,
Thou hast spelled us, spelled us eternally.
Thy notes fly earthward as flakes of fire
That drop from the storm-rent clouds of
desire ;
White as the flash of thy hand, I ween ;
Crimson and gold and purple and green ;
Heavenly dews that laugh with dawn ;
Silver of stars that are faint and wan ;
Mingling of spirit with flame and air,
Winged with joy and with joy's despair.

II

Hush! She hath builded an organ, her own;
It riseth from chaos, the infinite deep;
Through vasty chambers, through aisles un-
known,
The warring winds of the universe creep,
Passionate, fitful, with multitone moan.
Oh, the pipes are the wonderful caverns of space,
And the stops are the suns, and the keys are
stars;
Under a globe of crystal it towers,
Golden and ivory, bolts and bars.

III

And the world was sad in its bitter age,
Its wisdom had made it chill and gray;
It shivered through desolate hearts and
homes;
Despair was its lord and faith at bay.
A moan and a sob and a helpless cry,
A pallid prayer and a futile breath,—
The journey was made from the infant fear,
Through fruitless age to welcome death.
Angel, thou knewest the great dim thing,
Thou heldest the secret of its strange deep;
Brood o'er us all; from thy bright wing
Let the shadow of splendor wave and
creep.
Lost in the light of thine eyes, we forget
Sorrow, ambition, love, regret;
The prison opens, the pathway clears;
We feel the pulse of thy hope divine,
We have grown wise in that faith of
thine;
While sleep comes down and calm-eyed peace,
And our hearts lie still in woe's surcease.

THE HOMING DOVE

Athwart the deep blue of the skies ; above
Low-lying massy clouds ; in pulsing flight
Where shafted sunbeams sleep on wings of
white,
Speeds the bright wonder of the Homing Dove.
 Oh, dear delight,

The deep engulfing in the billowing skies !
The glad surrender to its Being's hest,
In flight to welcoming eyes and loving breast,
Whereon it stills its fluttering and lies
 In perfect rest !

Thine, too, the rapture of the Homing Dove,
When through the azure of long sunlit days,
In flight that some divine behest obeys,
Thou seekest, Heart, the haven of her love,
 In glad amaze.

TO JOY

Of old, I saw thee in thy starry robes
Athwart the pageant purple of the east.
Thine eyes were full of laughter ;
 I saw the wafture
 Of thy breezy hand
 Against dawn's fire,
Dawn's golden-stringèd crimson-fronted lyre ;
Within the faltering dusk thy white foot gleamed
 Tip-toe upon the bosom of a cloud.
 My spirit bowed.
I prayed to thee, Thou Joy.

Of late, I saw thee in white veils of flame
Pass slowly through a wild of new-made graves ;
Thine eyes were wide with wonder.

“ Yonder ! ”

Thy beckoning spirit-hand was loving, longing ;
A night was dawning
To stars serene.

“ My graves, my graves, Great Joy ! ”
Beneath wide arches
Marches

The silent soldiery of hopes undaunted ;
With faiths unwonted,
Faiths more proud,
My spirit leaned toward thee ;
My sad soul bowed ;
I prayed to thee, Thou Joy.

THE DIVER

If Thou wilt, send me there, O Lord,
To the deeps where the slime and the ooze
Run riot o'er dead men, long dead ; —
(Poor discolored flesh ! Poor bruised beaten
bones !)

Where the deep-sea monsters gape long
And are fain to devour me ; and I, —
Foregoing the dear human joy,
The one sweet moment of land
That beaches the infinite bounds
Of two oceans, — and I, alone,
(O God, do you hear ? Alone ?)
For my breath and my reason gasp long,
And stumble half-blind, all-mad ; —
Yea, Lord, if Thou wilt, send me there,
I shall thank Thee, O Lord, if I find
And bring back one pearl-seed for men.

APPLE-BLOOM

Oh, the apple-tree bends with its weight of bloom
 Down, down to the meadows of May;
While the warm wind, heaving the boughs aside,
Tosses the petals far and wide,
 Ensnowing the fragrant day.

From the topmost branch through the red and white
 Flits a robin with crimson breast;
Or he tilts on a perfumed flowery bough,
And chirps and chirps as he best knows how,
 For joy of the mate and the nest.

Lo! under the billowy odorous bloom,
 Where the rosy snow-drift lies,
My Love is singing in May-tide grace,
The apple-bloom on her upturned face,
 The love-light in her eyes.

Would ever as thus, we two, alone,
 'Neath the smile of the blue, blue sky;
Our nest built deep in the tree's white sway;
A song at our lips, by night, by day;—
 And the robin flitting by.

ARIZONA

Where the southland heaves its crest
 To the west,
And the warm sun glowing through
 Depths of blue
Sparkles in the radiant air ;
 Southward there,
Sunning all its tawny length,
 Lazy strength,
Lies the desert's vast extent,
 Opulent ;
Gorgeous in its cactus-crown,
 Red and brown ;
Of its mesquite and mescal,
 Prodigal ;
And its yucca's lily-flight,
 Slim and white.
Oh, those restless sculptors twain,
 Wind and rain,
Built it castles, grim and old,
 Flecked with gold ;
Haunted mesas, where the hosts
 Of dim ghosts
Troop in fluttering regret,
 Hoping yet
Down the steep to find a way.
 Oh, the day !
Quaking earth and bitter wail !
 “ Lost the trail ! ”

Here cliff-palaces, in years
 Dark with fears,
Did the Moqui build, complete,
 A retreat.
Here the Gila monster hides ;
 Here there glides
O'er the wastes the sly coyote.
 Else sounds float

Where the sudden clear creeks spring,
 Laugh and sing
Through the flowering willows dank
 On their bank.
There are pinyon forests here ;
 All the year
Falling nuts splash softly down,
 Small and brown.
Forests, too, of agate stocks,
 Jeweled rocks ;
Sands where smouldering garnets beam,
 Turquoise gleam.

Yonder, by the granite pent,
 Turbulent,
Colorado's waters beat
 Gleaming feet
Of its canyon's mighty swells.
 Citadels,
Turrets, temples, ruins vast,
 Lie at last,
White and yellow, red and dun
 In the sun,
Where the giant cliffs uprise
 To the skies ;
While within its trackless void,
 Wind-decoyed,
Mighty storm-clouds, grim and hoar,
 Are at war.
Still the shadowy violet haze,
 Through long days,
Height and depth and breadth thereof
 Broods above.

In the chasm's deep retreat,
At its feet,
Where through flowering almond trees
The soft breeze
Fans the changeless tropic day,
Kneading clay,
Braiding else the scented grass,
In the pass,
There the Havasupai race
Live in grace.

Arizona, o'er thy lands,
Sunny sands,
Gleams the light of old romance,
Magic chance ;
As thy dead volcano now
Lifts its brow
With the ancient fiery streak, —
Sunset Peak !
Coranado here of old
Sought for gold ;
Spanish saints the deserts trod,
Called of God,
Building the adobe church,
Making search
For the children of the west,
Long unblest,
Ages ere the Dauntless One
Braved the sun,
Breasted the wild river's flail,
Blazed the trail.
Now the star of empire gleams
In thy dreams
Of a destiny unwon,
And unsung.

COMMUNION

I know how alien are the hearts of men;
How veiled the eyes of spirit; how we stand
Aloof and cold, or quiver with distrust.

Aye, even lovers must
Forego the rapture of the sure command
Each of the other's inmost life;
And oh, we others, lovers not at all,
Who will not, perchance cannot see
Beyond the fatal wall
Of human difference, we
Are passing cruel to friend and foe,—
For thus, by some sad law, we strive
To keep alive
The flickering flame of individuality.

Yet in the hours of silence, when the strife
Of bitter tongues and clash of strong desire
And war of wills is still awhile,
Into the House of Understanding I retire;
And, kneeling at the altar, I require
Of God to know a little more of love-in-life,
To know my brother without pride or guile.
And, sudden, multitudes are nigh;
I hear the quivering sigh

Of broken-hearted mourners; hear
The wail of impotence, the gasp of fear,
The blasphemy of sin.
The shadowy aisles begin
To swim with faces, wild, convulsed
With vision of life's naked tragedies,
Its mortal longings, agonies.
And these are they erst-seen
Too-rich, or too-content, too-positive;
Or brutish, narrow-brained, unclean.
O God, forgive my blindness; me, forgive.

Oh, sorrows infinite !
The spirit's broken flight,
When in great loneliness the loving soul
Gazes with blank and burning eyes
Upon the Eden of the Not-to-be !
What agony
Engulfed in quicksands of a lower destiny !
Oh, still-born of the spirit and the flesh !
Oh, birth-pangs ! All the mother's throes,
Whose body, then whose heart the travail knows,
Delivering unto the world an individual,
One alien to herself, perchance hostile !

And once I cried, " What grief like mine ? "
I now divine
The universal grief ;
E'en as I love I shall not pray relief.
The pain my brother bore, I dare
To say, I, too, can bear ;
In fellowship of suffering, I am content
To take the cup of woe, the bread of sacrament.

Once I was quick in judgment, now
With eyes washed clear by tears would fain avow
The various issue, various name
Of the same high aim ;
I learn the meaning of the creed I scorn ; —
I find my brother's hardness born
Of ignorance like mine ;
I see his sins the shadows cast
By his great merit ; understand at last
How God from out his boundless ken
Finds less to pardon than we men.

AT ITS ROOTS.

One sudden day, my Love-Tree bloomed.
Long had I waited ; now, I stood
Shadowed by splendor, silent, glad.
But yonder was my friend's great tree
Still barren, save the little shoots
Of wistful green, enwrapping it.
Oh, my great joy was pitiful !
In loving kindness did I search
That strange sweet day, e'er marvelling
What subsoil-richness, sustenance
At root, had brought my tree to flower.
I craved the knowledge for thy sake,
Thy peace, O Friend.

Through that first day
My Love-Bloom rained its perfumes down ;
I saw how on the sky, like wings,
Its petals spread ; "God doth approve
My search," I cried.

The Gardener came.
" Nay, little child," He said, " Why seek ?
Thou are not Me to find, to know
The hidden roots of life. Be glad
Beneath thy blossoms."

Yet I toiled.
And night came and the sad stars wept
Their pallid tears of fire ; and souls
Of Dead Men turned the soil for me,
Laying their fleshless hands on mine,
Until I found the richness, found
The sustenance, life-giving, found
Thy bloodless heart — O Friend, my Friend.

PENELOPE

At the web I weave, till I go mad with weaving
The tangled web whose woof and warp is pain ;
And Despair, my handmaid, smiles at my de-
ceiving ;

She knows how vain my labors, — oh, how
vain !

Despair, Despair, cease from your endless mock-
ing ;

Let dreams I woven in gleam as they may ;
What if yet I know that Sorrow's shuttle rocking
Offwinds the threads of hope at death of day !

Let the dream of my Lord's return

Still warm my heart of woe ;

As ashes within the urn

May kindle and flame and glow.

Let me rest in thine arms once more,

As I rested, dear Lord, of yore ; —

One flash of thine eyes at the last

Shall heal the hurt of the past.

And the subtle thoughts of day and my deceiving
In hours of night are raveled and undone.

O ye suitors, scorned past word of believing,
To stoop to you from off my Lord's high
throne !

To yield the memory of his mighty passion ;

Leave that bright citadel, the stars above !

Oh, stinging shame that such as ye should ever
fashion

One thought of her who knew Odysseus' love !

And I cry from my lonely home,

Long, long hath the Troy-town burned ;

And from the dark sea's foam

They have greeted the heroes returned.

Not I, alone, alone ;

Sore weary of making moan ;

Whose eyes with no healing of tears
Are hot with the ache of the years.

O my cousin Helen, sorrow-bringing Helen,
Aye, bitter was the day when thou wast born ;
Yea, bitter unto thee ; unto thousands fallen
In shallow graves of votive off'rings shorn,
And oh the mocking phantoms that beset me
When yearningly I gaze o'er sea and shore !
O Love, my Love, do not, do not forget me
Though singing Sirens cling to thy lax oar ;
Though the Queen of the Island west
Shall sing with the nesting birds,
Where the cedar-flame leaps like a star
At the sound of her wooing words ;
Though the Witch of the crafty art
Her magic fires shall impart ;
And the scent of the lotus-flower
Thy weary heart overpower.

Ah, but still in patient pain I wait forever,
Yet happy if a dream of me shall pass ;
If in honied hours of love thou dost remember
Thy bride of long since, pale now as autumn
grass.
My dear Lord, there comes no end to my for-
giving,
And my repining has no end save death ;
Nor while I deem that thou perchance art living
Would I yield the shades this sorrow-laden
breath.
Still, still in the island west,
I wait while the night falls low ;
And I gaze o'er the sea's white breast
And hark as the breezes blow.
I hear the soft swish of oar,
And a ship as it grates on shore, —
In maddening joy, shall I die ?
Comes he back, O Earth, — O Sky ?

DEAD LOVE

There was no moaning of the passing-bell
When thou diedst unto me. No sudden rush
Of whirlwind from that undiscovered Dark
Beyond the Dusk blew thitherward thy soul,—
Poor soul that fluttered like a wounded bird,—
While I crept sobbing to the dim world's end,
With eyes that darkness blinded, lips that shook
With pleading, hands that beat the tenuous air.
Nay, there was lightsome music all that day;
Friends gave me careless greeting, knowing not;
Guests claimed my service, oh, the long, long
while!

Yet Death in mask of Life pressed close to me;
His gray and ample shroud that smelt of tears
Darkened the gracious light, his austere wings
Winnowed the harvest-meadows of my soul
And left them bare and barren evermore.

If I had given the dear, dear clay of thee
To appease the hunger of the insatiate grave,
The hoarse intoning of the sullen wind,
The two-edged sword of the frost, the crush
Of snow, had torn my heart with wounding
thought

Of their cruel buffeting of thee; and fear
That thou shouldst sense their rude indignities
Had driven me in passionate revolt
Unto the dreary goal of thy pent grave.
Yea, and the summer sweetness of the sun
And grass; the dewy breath of spring; the lilt
Of melodies, once loved, had pierced my breast
With keener anguish for the bitter fear
That thou shouldst sense them not. And yet I
know

The sorrow irremediable shall find
Healing in its own hopelessness, nor beat

Forever with bruised wings the gateless wall ;
The throbbing sorrow, chance may still transmute
To joy, shall find no peace, shall beat to shreds
Its broken wings upon the gates of life.

It thou hadst died, sometimes the Comforter
Had breathed his peace into my swollen heart ;
And all the gracious memories of thee
Had come to bless me ; — memories whose moan
Were musical, white-flaming memories
That now no murk of life can darken, nor
No hostile wind of alien passion fan
To fitful flickers that shall race to death
Upon the ragged cliffs of broken vows.
But the pale wraith of love long dead shall walk
With restless footsteps through the marts of life ;
And barter all her fairest memories
At bidding of the traitor Doubt ; and deem
Her coronal of drooping lilies black
And scentless, then, as now ; and in one grave
Shall lay the wished-for future and the past,
Perfect, beyond the measure of desire.

Sometimes, if thou wert dead, I should have
dreams
Wherein the marvellous hope that stricken men
Have cherished in their bosoms from of old
Should bud and open all its lustrous heart
In bloom immortal. There, beyond the veil
That men's exploring senses cannot find,
Thou wouldst wait me ; love's sovereignty
In tender memory would clip thy wings
And stay thy steps ; thou wouldst not outrun me ;
Thou wouldst delay unsealing of the ear,
Unscarfing of the eye ; delay, delay
The eager voyage of discovery,
Come later to the wide apocalypse.
But now, we shall grow old, apart,

Nor change to likeness of a face beloved.
The riot of the blood within thy veins
Shall bring thee visions that I know not of,
And turn thy footsteps toward the south ;
While I shall pace the bleak and cheerless north.
How can I bid thee wait me ? If, perchance,
Our paths should cross again, we two should meet
As strangers meet, with formal courtesy
And curious speculation ; know alone
That the wild throb of clinging lips
Were still ; the loving spell of answering hands
Were broken. Never shall the blighted bud
Shake with the thrill of bloom, nor bear the
weight
Of living seeds ; but it shall droop and hear
The immemorial moan of all the years.

THE BIRTH

Dear, should the Heaven yearn,
And all her starry passions merge in one ;
Her loves and longings of the stars and suns
 Grow one vast yearning,
Gold-shot as is a sea of amber touched by lights
 Of nightly fires and fervors ;
Should Heaven yearn thus, 'twould bring forth a
soul, —
Thine, passioned Drop of Being, thine,
Bright Thing of star and shine, of sun and fire.

Dear, should a Prayer take life ;
Should all her perfect pleading give her wings ;
And those wings raise her to the holy heights,
 The realms ecstatic,
Beneath which floats in crystal clarity
 The universe God breathed through ;

Her white virginity might too conceive ;—
Thee, child of Sanctity's sweet womb ;
Thee, Woman-soul of God's own purity.

Dear, should the tired Earth smile ;
The weary, ancient, wrinkled mother smile ;
And that one Smile sink deep in anxious hearts
 Of poor earth children
To solace them, to comfort them, to soothe,
 To linger like a blessing ;
Methinks that should that gladdening Smile give
 birth,—
O Thou, my one earth-comfort, Thou,—
Mine own Heart-balm that heal'st for me life's
 hurt.

HELEN OF TROY

Helen, thou passionate Queen, thy pulse is throbbing, now, now ;
I can feel the soft flush of thy hand, can see the
 white light of thy brow ;
Whirling, thy tresses sweep in mine eyes the
 flashes of suns ;
And thine arms enfold me till deeps of a soul-
 swerving longing comes !
Oh, to lie still in the song of thy wonderful
 being's sweep ;
To dream in the azured light of a love-filled,
 love-sweet sleep ;
To fold to my desolate heart thee of the world's
 desire ;
And to passion my soul to thy soul as star is
 passioned to star.

A LAY FOR MY LADY

“ Sweet, my Lady, have mercy, I love thee ;
See how I bend here before thee ;
Adore thee.

Thou child of the Snow-Queen, with silent frost
heart,
I would that the beams of love’s noon-sun might
dart
Into the crystalline deeps of that whiteness ;
Leave thee undone ;
As I sigh at thy feet, O thou cruel, O thou fair
One !
Have mercy, my Lady.”

She answereth not ; but draweth aside
Her faint-rustling robe with a gesture of pride ;
And her eyes with their opaline shadows and
dreams,
And her hair with its rich dusky glintings and
gleams,
Shone on him afar, as on leaf shineth star ;
And she smileth disdain,
Nor heedeth the pain :
“ Have mercy, my Lady.”

She speaketh : “ My Lord, I pray thee to tell me
What may be this love that so strangely assails
thee,
And can lead thee wherefore to kneel at my feet,
To adore, to entreat ? ”
It bewild’reth my Lady.

“ My Lady, to tell thee
Were the secret of all thy sweet self to reveal
thee.
Love ! 'tis the glint in thine eyes and thy hair ;
'Tis the lilt of thy step in the grasses, grown 'ware
Of all the soft pulses of heart and of vein ;

And love is the sense of thy worshipful name,
"Tis the curve of thy wrist, the sweep of thy
gown,
And the throb of thy voice as it falleth adown
To that last note,—
Oh, the thrill of thy throat!
Have mercy, my Lady."

Hear her scorn, as she saith:
" My Lord, 'tis strange lore,
And more,—
Perchance thou canst tell me yet more!"
Oh, bewildered my Lady.

" 'Tis the sense of the star and the secret of weed;
'Tis the rhythm of breeze through the wheatland
and mead;
'Tis the soul of all music; glint of all dreams;—
Words are vain; Love, I ween,
Is the life o' thee, Queen.
Have mercy, my Lady."

But in silence she sitteth and watcheth the sun-
lance
Pierce through the leaves of the arbor;
Nor throweth a glance
At her lover beside her.
Then cometh the noontide and heat cometh on;
She calleth her nurse, the old wrinkled crone,
Who hath wisdom with wrinkles.
" God bless thee, my Lady."

She hobbleth away with many a groan;
Then looketh aback at the knight and her lady.
" Ah, well-a-day, my sweet child!" she saith.
She pauseth for breath,
" It were well
If the spell

Of Love's brewing shall teach her
What he cannot preach her,—
For God bless thee, Lady."

Anon, she comes back with two crystalline goblets;

And the crown of the one is foamy with snows,
And o'erbeaded with bubbles of ruby and gold,
That the sunlights slip through, like a bee through
a rose;

Limpid and cool as brook-water glows
The white gleam of the other:
"The red for my Lady;
The white, sir, for thee.
God bless ye, my children."

Why, see how my lady is pondering the glints
That play through the vintage, as though she
were fain

To gather her hints
Of strange coming futures and fervors!
It bewildereth my Lady.

While lifting his cup athwart the bright sky,
With his eyes on his mistress he frameth a sigh,
"Have mercy, my Lady."

And the old wrinkled crone muttereth on,
Muttereth on,
"Now drink ye, my children;
God bless ye, my children."

He raiseth the cup to his lip,
And pledges his love in a lingering sip;
Then he drinketh the liquor, aye, draineth the
cup,
And laying the goblet aside, riseth up.
"Have mercy, my Lady."

Lo! See my Lady!

Slowly, as one in the swoon of a dream,
She tastes of the vintage; her white fingers seem
To circle the crystal like wind-flowers;

Her eyes

Are alight to the deeps with the fires of the skies.

She drinketh,
She drinketh.

“God bless thee, my Lady.”

He hummeth the song of an army on march,
And paceth the sward with a soldierly tread.

See my Lady!

She hath risen her seat, she hath lifted her head.
“My Lord! Peace to thee, Beloved,” she said.

Oh, bewildered my Lady!

And a tremble o’ red ’gan stir in her cheek;
And the breath o’ her breath was atremble and
weak

With manifold flutterings and wingings;
The frost heart is loosened, hath broke forth in
singings;

She calleth him, calleth as soft as the dove,
“My Love,” she hath said it, “My Lord and my
Love!”

Yea, bewildered my Lady.

He starts from camp reveries,
Draweth near proudly;
He maketh obeisance,
“Have mercy, my Lady,”
He speaketh right coldly.

“The fever for lance and for battle is on me;
Dismiss me; oh, believe me.”

She faltereth lowly, “I love thee. Wouldst leave
me?”

“Have mercy, my Lady!”

Oh, he laugheth in scorn: "What is love, O my
Lady?"

She droopeth brown lights of her eyes to his feet,
Sinking to green sward.

She raiseth eyes heavenward;

"My Lord, it is this!

'Tis service, I wis;

'Tis exquisite yearning;

The heart at its shrine;

'Tis this kneeling of mine."

All bewildered my Lady.

But he turneth away, "What is love? Canst
reply?"

And her sweet faltering words she hath hushed;
On the green of the grasses her bright tresses lie,
While her lips seek the place that his footsteps
have brushed.

"O my Love, thou didst love me;

What is it," she moans,

That hath changed thee on sudden?"

"Oh, love," saith the knight,

"It goes with the hour,

And we pass with the sun-slant from under its
power.

Thou art fair, O my Lady, but fairer, more dear,
Is the neigh of the steed on the battlefield,

Clash of the spear.

Farewell to thee, Lady."

She moaneth, she moaneth,

"Woe's me! Let me go

To the battlefield with thee,

And shield thee,

And lo!

Thou shalt rest on my heart when the battles are
over.

O Beloved, to serve thee,—
Have mercy upon me!"

“ Peace, dear, my Lady, I go.”
It bewildereth my Lady.

Oh, she swooneth to trees and to sun and to
grasses;
And her white face upturned shineth as snow-
flowers in passes
Of high mountain glens; and her poor lips are
pale
And stir not with breath nor tremble with wail.

But nigh cometh the crone,
And she muttereth on,
“ Now God bless thee, Lady.”

She kneeleth beside her and crooneth her wis-
dom:

“ It was so since the first,
'Tis the way of this earth.

For him, I wis, it is love and forgetting;
For her, I wis, it is love and regretting.

The thrall for dominion shall hold him forever;
Love's pulse in her bosom shall cease — never,
never.

Power for the man and sorrow for woman.

He hath taught her to love;
Ah, when shall she learn

The lesson he learneth so quickly, to turn?”

She bends o'er her lady,
With hand on her breast;

“ God bless thee, my Lady,”
She saith;

“ Give thee rest!

Now thy breath

Cometh more quickly. .

Aye, and she moaneth;

It is well yet,” she crooneth.

“ God bless thee, my Lady,
Thy lot is the best.”

MY PRAYER

I pray for the eye that shall pierce
The veil of the passing show;
For the hand that is strong to build;
The mind that dares to know.

I would fain sing the song that shall heal
Man's ancient sorrow and sin;
I would sound the deeps of despair
And sovereign Deliverance win.

Yet if,—oh, the seeming world
Is exceeding dear and fair;
And perchance to be quiet and smile
Is as strong as to do and dare.

I pray for unsullied strength
To fight the battles of Right;
To lead in fearless assault
On the ramparted legions of Night.

And yet, if instead I may fight
The wrong in one heart alone,
'Tis a harder battle, perchance,
Than ever waged round a throne;

For no sound of martial music
Spurs on the heavy feet;
And the battlefield lies in silence,
Comes victory or defeat.

I pray for the Heavenly Love;
For the light of her shining glance;—
Love of the mighty wings,
Hymned in sacred romance.

Yet Love in the sober gray,
Who is patient and will not yield,
Whose hands are tender to soothe,
Though her eyes to the vision are sealed,

Is the Love that for ages hath done
The weary work of the world,
Who clings, perchance, closer to earth,
Since the wings of her fancy are furled.

Perchance, — O multiform Life,
Teach me the perfect Will,
That my heart may be patient and wait,
When my eager feet must be still.

BUBBLES

See how the little one stands in delight,
Blowing the bubbles, then tossing in flight;
See how they float in azure space,
And upward dart in mocking race!
Beautiful, shimmering, vanishing things,
Water of gold with rainbow wings!

Laugh, little boy, run here, run there,
Catch, if thou canst, the ball of air;
Touch but the gold and all is o'er; —
Blow, little boy, yet more, yet more.
Dance of a sunray, purple and green;
Dance a moonbeam of silver sheen!

Ah, little boy, some of wrinkled brow
Blow, blow bubbles, even as thou; —
Beautiful bubbles, fragile and gold,
Breaking like tears on a cheek grown cold;
Not to be clasped, they float away
Into the dawn of a fairer day.

WAILING AND WEARINESS

Wailing and weariness,
Vain !

Not wail, not silence holds it,—
Birth-throes, death-agonies,
Passions of untamed spirits,
Sweet sanities,
Vast mad insanities.

Hear how the Mocker laughs !

“ My Fool, thou canst not catch it ;
Thou callst it Self — poor Egoist —
And Love, — thou simple Satirist —
And God, and Genius, Devil.

Lo ! behind the vail

Thou canst not see,
Nor know what baffles thee ;
Thou canst not wholly feel,
Thou canst not flee

The mad bewilderment,
The spirit-rending wonder,
The sense of baffling agonizing Mystery.

Thou wild bird caught in web of silk too fine !

Thou bruised misty-wingèd Thing
Dashing thy life out 'gainst the bounds too
crystal-clear !

Thou Soul, lost in thine own waste-void.”

TANGLE

See, Dear, what tangle of leaves,
 What tangle of sunlight and leaves,
Where the loitering winds are blowing,
And the rippling sun-tides flowing;
 See, Dear, what tangle of leaves!
O Love, what tangle of soul,
 What tangle of spirit and soul,
Where the leaf-buds of promise are blowing,
And the tides of our passion flowing;
 O Love, what tangle of soul!

TO A WHITE BUTTERFLY

Gauze of tenuous mist;
 White-winged, white-souled Thing;
Thou wonderful flutter and flight;
Thou ravishing, vanishing sight;
 Thou flower of the living wing!

Grace-note flown from song,
 Song of the summer wind;
I am holden in grieved amaze
As I follow thy circling ways,
 For, lo! I am left behind.

FOREBODING

Unto the mournful Night I fled,
While the World was sleeping;
Around me pressed the troubled Dead,
Aweeping, weeping.

And aged Fear walked by my side,
And wrinkled Sorrow,
Who shook their hoary locks and cried,
“Alas! Tomorrow!”

Hope stumbled o'er the thorny lea
In weary token
That even she her hour must dree,
Her wing was broken.

I sank beneath the blighted tree
Whose fruit is madness;
The drooping branches, long and dank,
Dripped dews of sadness.

The little leaves hanging pale and meek
Began to quiver;
Their chilly fingers brushed my cheek
With many a shiver.

And oh, a grave in the Dark, somewhere,
Was hidden, hidden;
I cried, “Who as guest to that cold lair
Hast thou, Death, bidden?”

But no sound came to me over the waste
Save of wild winds blowing;
The bitter fruit I pluckéd in haste,—
The mad are knowing.

WHOM THE POTTER FORGOT

In the turn of the Wheel, I am one
Whom the Potter forgot.

Poor Pitcher, misshapen, thrown by,
Without handle or spout!

I have held not the wine of the King,
Nor the dews of rebirth;
Nor gladdened the lips — would I might! —
Of the toilers of earth.

Yet open I lie to the sky,
Whence the sweet rains run
And mix with the odorous breaths
Of the wind and the sun.

Forgot by the trafficking world,
I may hold in despite
The brewings, potent and wild,
Of the storm and the night.

And oh, the creatures small
That beg me for dole;
And the frayed and travel-stained wings
That are dipped in my bowl!

And perchance when the gracious rains
More plenteous fall,
I, too, overflowing, may bless,
As I fain would bless, all.

Or at last some sun-smitten day
May break me in two,
And the spilt dew at my heart may refresh
Yes, You, Potter, You!

THE FLIGHT OF THE ALONE TO THE ALONE

Φυγή μόνου πρὸς μόνον.

All loving, yet all unloved, back I come
To Thee, Great Love, unloved;
With fireless, prayerless worship, deaf and dumb,
Thou Great Alone! I come.

Back to all circling motion's centered Calm;
Back to the barren Waste;
Without or plaintive hymn or chanted psalm,
I come, I come, Sad Calm.

Back without sound of sob, slow sob or moan;
In pity, lonely God!
The flight of one alone to Thee Alone,—
Why sob or throb or moan?

MOON-DAWN

Dim hour enchanted! Through Dusk's silver
bloom
The white-barked weeping birches trail
Their gleaming branches in the undergloom.

And palpitating fireflies whirl and drift
Like flakes of flame upon a lazy wind,
And white fore-glimmers through the tree-tops
sift.

I lie within the scented grasses, seek
Some sweet release from my sweet reverie,—
And then, a vagrant star falls on my cheek.

Alas, no star! The firefly blows away.
Oh, see! The lovely tracery of the long birch
bough
Against the glinting of the moon's new day.

HARVEST DAYS

The sunlights slant through the kerneled grains,
And the silent shadows sift atween,—
And oh for the golden prophecies
In the young sweet days when the fields were
green!

'Tis the harvest at last, though the heaps be
scant,
For the wind and weather and thwarted toil;
Nay, not all at fault is the growing thing
That upward strives through the thirsty soil;
For the work of the year makes long demands
On the delicate strength of the children of
earth,
And the courage that pierces dust and sun
Hath earned its rest ere another birth.

Yea, sweetest of all are the harvest days,
Though Spring be sweet when the sap runs
new,
And joy stirs long in the troubled seed
And shines in the upturned drop of dew.

Come silent splendors and rich content;
It is well, it is well, for the work is done;
And I dream o'er the time when I, too, shall be
In my harvest days with the long rest won.

LEAFING

I am lost in the silver silence
That comes ere Spring's hour of birth,
When the pallid vault of the heavens
Arches low o'er the breathless earth.

'Tis the silver silence that harbors
The wandering moan of a dove;
The sibylline silence that shelters
The sobbings of desolate love.

'Tis the silence that breaks as a bubble
'Neath the wanton whir of a wing;
That breaks into musical laughter
At the faltering foot-fall of Spring.

Ah, hush! Is the silence broken?
What faint sweet notes arise!
Hear the sound of leaf-buds expanding
With tender and tremulous sighs.

What dainty fingers to wreck it,
My silver-blue dome of air!
What fragile music to shatter
My crystalline temple of prayer!

Leaflets tender and shining
With the starry dews of birth,
Half-furled in clinging reluctance,
Ashiver with timid mirth!

How the tree-mother holds them unto her,
And croons them a simple song;
Or smile as her fluttering nestlings
Stretch skyward their wings, grown strong.

Behold! I am stirred by the leafing
 Into tremulous silence,— ah, me!
My Soul dares venture a leaf-bud
 Out into Mystery.

My leaf is reluctant and sober;
 Like the tiniest bud it has fear
Of the wan frosts, the false winds that linger
 In the wake of the year.

Great Tree-mother, Thou, too, be gracious!
 Let thy plenteous sap outgush.
Bless my leafing, renew it, fulfill it
 In this hour of the springtide hush.

I WALKED WITH DEATH

I walked with Death an hour, along the surge
 Of saltish waters, dragging heavy feet
And straining sullen ears to the dull dirge
 Of booming breakers, ere I gasped to beat
The aching dumbness into words, to reach
 The sympathy of speech.

“Love, Love, how like an orphaned child to thee
 I crept, forth the long terrors of the night.
Thy strength should haven and thy joy make
 free!
O Love! O Lost! how hath the promised light
Plunged deep into the midmost dark of all,
 Gone, gone beyond recall!”

Death touched my eyelids with his withered hand.
“Aye, so I know it, Sovereign Death,” I cried;
“Mine own my sin and anguish, or I stand
 Reluctant, or with flaming feet the wide
Dark way of individual growth explore,
 I must alone, none more.”

“ Yet oh, the Mystics ! ” I made murmur. “ They
Who grope straight sunward with the slow,
sad hands,
And wise eyes glory-filmed ; who trail the way
With drooping censers, sweet with shifting
sands
Of incense, wreathed with lotus-flower ; oh, long
They chant the quiet song.

“ ‘All yea,’ they sing of that white Lily-bloom,—
The silver radiancy, whose lustrous heart
The shining holds of perfect primal doom ;
Not angelry, not demony apart ;
Not Self, not God, not fleshly Flesh, not Soul ;
One Lily, one white Whole.”

Death looked athwart the waters with wide eyes.
I moaned, “ Oh, pardon, victims of the sea !
Nay, calm’s no recompense for wreckage. Flies
The hurt bird better for the one that’s free ?
Strong prayer is fruit of action and faith sears,
Save kindling faith’s new fears.”

“ Of these tears, what ? ” Death asked. “ I’d
bare, O Death,
This quivering flesh to all thine arrowy pains ;
Not for myself I fear, thine icy breath
From love’s deep pity draws the heavy rains.”
Death said, “ Take counsel of thine own proud
strength.”
I counsel took, — at length.

O coward, craven heart ! O brutish pride !
I like a god stand firm and drain release
From out the cup of anguish ; meanwhile guide
That cup from others, greeting them with
“ Peace ! ”
Pain’s minister were better, swift to smite,
As smites Truth’s withering light.

Death smiled. "Twin-sister of eternal change,
O Truth, flash gently on these dazzled eyes;
O Many-pinioned, give the wanderer range,
Give wings that lift unto receding skies,
Unto new suns and splendors, suns star-fed,—
Stars, of that feeding, dead."

"No life," said Death, "holds life in compass;
knows

All Love, all Faith, the Act's creative thrill,
Joy's pangs, Despair's surrender; yet there flows
Through each the passion of the living Will;
Each life is Life, the pulse within the vein,
The Altar in the fane."

Then Life, mine ancient enemy, seemed dear;
I wavered towards her with expectant eyes;
I cried, "I yield my pity, yield my fear;
O Life, the Multiform, I would be wise!"
Then Death pressed on my brow an icy kiss.
"To thee Life giveth this."

HIGH-WATER MARK

Ah God, there, there, athwart the granite ledge
Of Memory, lies the accusing hand,
Mine own high-water mark! Below, the strand
Lies fouled by stagnant waters, slimy sedge.

There rolled one time the lordly inland sea,
With inspirations of a thousand springs,
And gracious winnowings of snowy wings
That sought in friendliness the expanse free.

(O heart, be still! Upon the skirting height
What golden glooms, where shadows shot with
sun
Through silences of fragrant forests run,
And quiver with the thrilling breath of light!)

O circling hills, my waters swept of yore
With loving waves of life! Those waves for-
lorn
Fall now as mildew-blight on tasseled corn.
Dear hills, I loved then, but now love the more.

I dare not raise nor drop mine eyes. Above
There lies the fatal ripple-mark; below
The dreary desolation. Yea, I know
The death I bring unto the hills I love.

OLD EARTH

To sink back into life, life multitudinous,—
It is so sweet, a sinking back of birth;
The pillowing heart and head, so world-forespent,
Upon the soft green pillow of old earth,
 Soft pillow redolent
Of all reposeful summers and all cooling snows.
To be quite still, save for the healing touch
Of growing grass and sense of flowing sap
And healthy, happy movements of slow things.
To think not, yet be conscious of so much;
To feel the bird's song, throat and wings,
That careless song wherewith God pays
With usury unto his creatures his great debt,—
Creative joy of six momentous days,—
To feel it, and to feel the bird's forgetfulness
 Of what it means;
And how he sings because it seems
 He needs must sing;
No reasoning of duty, nor no cares of song.
To grow myself as careless as a bird,
Intent upon my round of duties with no word
 Of feverish haste lest I be long,
 Or breaking fear lest I should fail.
There are so many of us, and God knows
That one is only one. One means so little;
And aye, perchance, much too. What can avail
To question that? To grow quite still seems
better,
 And wise and very godly;
Quite still and happy, laying by the myriad half-
doubts,
And e'en the sins once sinned so proudly
 In weak and wayward ignorance,—
 Not half so heavy, if I knew.
Not now to cry for wings to scale the blue;

Nor mad for freedom's whetted lance ;
Sleeping the hours away, or waking, dreaming,
Prone on the healthy turf, so warmly seeming
Sheeted by balmy blue and fleecy white,—
Thrown by a skyey hand o'er couch of green,—
Ministered to by ever new delight ;
By wondrous dear bed-fellows, as they lean
Toward hand or cheek with shy caress,—
So richly does our Mother Earth still bless
With tiny brothers of the dust and air,
And, most of all, the live ant in his thoughtless
care,
Creeping upon me with the sense of small blessed
restful labors,
Such labors as may be (and not too hard,
If God will) for a child that's tired.

BAFFLED

Elusive, oh, elusive seemeth all ;
I cannot measure aught nor find the core ;
The strange sweet depth eludes me evermore ;
And, baffled, at the goal I fall.

The mist-bloom on the peach, the smell of rain,
The fingers of the wet wind on my brow ;—
They stir my troubled senses, they avow
I know not what unfathomed pain.

And all immortal melodies I hear
Seem but a passing prelude, faint and fine,
To that orchestral harmony divine
That haunts my fretted ear.

Mine eyes are baffled by each passing shade ;
By rifted dome of cloud of pearly sheen ;—
Ah, portal to what palaces unseen
Is that ensilvered palisade ?

The dark pine forest has a thousand aisles,
And here the wild Wood-Spirit takes her rest ;
And if I seek her, vain my prolonged quest ;
She vanisheth with beckoning wiles.

I've thrown myself on Mother Nature's breast,
To hear her heart beat and to breathe her breath ;
Her calm sweet smile is on me as she saith,
"The throbbing is thine own unrest."

And sometimes, too, as in a clear dark pool
I long to gaze upon mine own strange soul ;
It is in vain, the troubled waters roll,
Comes not the outline, sharp and cool.

Why, Dear, I ofttimes search thine eyes, e'en
thine,
I am not sure that I have found just Thee ;
Thy image floats before and mocketh me,
I never feel Thee wholly mine.

And God, in his mysterious Being, still,
A dim mirage, is seen and lost again ;
I seek to pass the antechamber ; vain ;
My steps are spelled upon the sill.

MONISM

Oh, how at one is my heart
With the infinite oneness of things !
How it sings in the song of each bird,
Flies on its wings !

Prone on the outwarder flash
Of the great All-Will it lies ;
And watches its play in a soul ;
Shining the skies.

Oh, it is joy to say
To the clod of earth, " Thou art I " :
And to mirror myself in each tree,
Wonderful I !

Rest, it is rest to pray,
" Dear God, it is so, I am thou ;
True, true, thou once wert on earth,
Thou who art now."

Deeply thou canst not hide,
Behold, I see thee in whole ;
In this marvellous hand I see,
See in this soul.

Outward and inward alike ;
And sweet hate and love, the same ;
It matters not, heaven or hell,
I read thy name.

Strange indivisible Whole,
Thou Whole of the myriad parts,
Thou thrillest thyself and me,
Pulse of two hearts !

THE SOUL-BEYOND

Past rhythmic motion, sweet flesh, scent ;
Past Beauty's wide realm, sound and sight ;
Past fever of this sense-world, went
 The Soul-Beyond.

The Soul-Beyond ! scarce realized, wholly known ;
Sought in the dusk of sight, the dumb of tongue ;
When love is passion-still, when dreams are
 flown ;—
 The Soul-Beyond.

Sweet in the unthought Thought to lie ;
Peace for the Soulless, Souls among ;
Joy of the deathless Death to die ;
 Thou ! Soul-Beyond !

Lost in the trackless wilderness of Space ;
Lost in the lengthening ages, ageless grown ;
The child-eyed Mystery, friendly, face to face ;—
 The Soul-Beyond.

A QUESTION

In that gray time,
In that long weariness and bitter pain ;—
 Yes, fold me, Love, within thine arms, sustain
And comfort me, lest I forget and deem,
As once I deemed it all, a dream,
A dream too fair
For earthly verity ;
And so return that time of desolation, of despair ;
When doubt lay coiled, a serpent, 'twixt us ;
And sin's dim augury
Lay heavy on our hearts, foreboding night,
And the world's shadow darkened on our sight.

Oh, those old days!
When agony is my familiar friend;
And the long tireless pulses in me send
The heated blood through valve and vein,
Dissolving in me heart and limb and brain;—
And I forget my childhood; nevermore
To stand upon Joy's tideless shore
And echo all her rippling song;
Ah, nevermore with raptures long
To gladden on the breast of day
And ruffle with soft fingers each bright plume,
Laughing to see how golden wings illume
The purple splendor of her way.
Yea, and it died forever,
Careless gayety of simple youth and glee;
In lamentation and in moan
The days slipped on.

Then flood-time came;
And from the sobbing shoals of personal wrong
I crept with hesitating feet along
Into the deep salt ocean of all pain;
And its waves broke upon me, breast and head;
It deluged me; its mighty flood
Of waters blinded me, and thinned my blood
To one long stream of saltish bitterness;
And like one dead
It tossed me to the barren cheerless shore
Of helpless speculation.
Faiths broken, when faith's need the greatest.

Why?

Oh, the long question! Why the mumbled creed;
The prayer that issues in a senseless cry;
Love in its shroud and Love's own breaking need
Of Love so shrouded;
The long, long wail of thwarted passion; aspirations clouded?

Why
The dreadful mockery of what seems high ;
The shameless nakedness of sin ; the misery
Of want, the ravenous ; the rending fangs
Of pitiless insanity ?

And no redress,
Save the low lids of cruel indifference,
Or death in all full bitterness.
Oh, but I called the Maker to the bar,
Who planned the whole, — Him I arraigned ;
Adjured Him by his sovereign power,
By that dear name of God, so named
Of loving faith, to answer ; lay the fear
Of demony in mastery.

Ah me !
Why should the golden fruit hold evermore
The worm at its dead core ?
Why should the blast that withers come before
The hand that garners ? Why the gate of death

Swing joyward ?
Me, helpless drift,
Thoughts tossed to doubts, and doubts uplift
To fling on madness !
And the long woes of times now run ;
And the long woes of time to come
Found focus in thine own sad eyes that yearn to
bless,

And yearn in vain.
“ If I were God ! ” Nay, it may be that I
Have made in all misknowledge this sad Hell ;
I and you others, and we pay in pain
The price of our misdoing. It is well.

Sin, shadow, serpent,
Gone!

Love, Love, and we two one!

And though the old sweet gayety shall not return,
A sweeter somewhat in its stead has come;
Something so full of mystery,
That laughter holds it not; more sad
Than tears; than happiness more glad;
And Knowledge's wide, slow gates
Are opening toward me;
Mine eye with vision burns and waits
To see perfected beauty;
And I am nerved to meet life's passion,
For living justifies life's fashion.

O patient Heart above me!

Is my discovery,
Is the quick light that flashes me,
All individual?

Is prescient love for love alone grown wise?

Is love's significance that gives all cries

Their perfect meaning,
Significant for only lovers?

What of those others?
Hadst thou not come to me,

Should I still be

In hopeless question by the rise and fall
Of billowy agony?

Contains my deep content, content for all?

L.of C.

THE PIONEERS

I

THE PLAINT

It is so far, O God, it is so far;
And we have wandered many a weary year;
Thy wastes stretch onward, ever on; austere
Before us lie thy bleaknesses; thy bar
Gigantic of Alaskan frost; thy scar
Of whitened sunsick sands;—O God, we fear
Thy savageries, thy desolations drear;
Yea, dumb, while of gaunt deaths oracular.

We have grown old in battling, O thou God!
Behold these grizzled hairs, these furrowed
pangs,
These twisted, roughened hands; these feet long
shod!
For us thy reclaimed prairies bear not, clangs
Of building cities ring not; nor the glow
Of warm sweet fellow-living do we know.

II

THE PAEAN

It is enough, O God, enough to seek,
Not find. The harvest-joy of worlds redeemed
Was ours in that great time of light, when
seemed
The living thought to leap from peak to peak,
Onward from silence into song; not weak,
Not wavering song, but floods of sound else
dreamed
Of mountain music, song that rolled and
streamed
Relentless, thundering down the thin harsh shriek
Of pain. We gird our loins, we are grown wise;
We cry, not rest, but vision ere the night.
Let thy prophetic glory smite our eyes
With eagerness; our nameless hands with
might.
O Vast! O Undiscovered! O Unwon!
Toward Thee our pioneer feet press on and on.

THE CHANT OF THE COAL HEAVERS

What we chant from the womb of the Deep, O
ye men, will ye hear?
To the harsh noise and toil of the Dark, O ye
White-faced, lend ear?
With your plummet dropped sheer, to the grimy
deeps hurled,
Would ye sound, as your God might, the heavy
work of the world?

Yea, let the banner speed high, let it flaunt the
sun's mirth,
Let the man-cry exultant go beating the rim of
the earth;
Hist! how the wild cannon missiles triumphantly
sing!
See the free, the glad death-dance, the maddening
swing
To the jubilant chaotic First, to the rapturous
verve
Of Beginning. Wist! Never a thought of the
straining nerve
In the dark; of the sullen, the slow, the heavy
breath
That is silently throttled in grip of a passionless
death;
Without thrill at the bullet's turbulent kiss, nor
cry
Of the martial soul in its lordly frenzy to die.
Is it day? Is it night? Is the battle lost? Is it
won?
Give us answer. Whose fires have speeded the
war-ship on?
Whose muscles have strained, have tugged 'gainst
the force of the deep?
Whose eyes have foregone the victorious light-
nings of sleep?

All's well. To serve Heroes we're patient and
give our day;
A brute in yoke for a man, 'twere better, we say,
Than a brute made god to be offered fool-worship
and praise.
Our birth-right were better, the smouldering
labor of days,
And the grim sacrificial off'ring of Godhead
and light,
Than the bloodless ease of a Thing, or the blind-
ness of sight.
Stalwart warriors of God! Ye fight 'neath the
sun. In the dark
We are stifling, all sluggish; yet blindly we grope
toward a spark
Of the infinite purpose in battle, and dully we
flame
At the thundering call of the militant trumpet.
We claim
Of the manhood, the freedom, that shall be, our
portion. Up, then,
And complete as for Man the fiery salvation of
men.

A PRAIRIE TRAIL

The prairie's billowy rolling led me. 'Ware
 Of its wild trail I wandered on my way,
 The happy vagrant of a sunny day.
Lost in the open freedom I could dare
Sing freely, proudly; it was mine to share
 Its inspirations; I could laugh aloud
 Because 'tis bowed,
My song, to earthward. "Even so," I sing,
"Is bowed to earthward the wide curving sky."
 And so my song grew still for marvelling.

The western sky! It hushed my song. Up-
 flashed
Its blue, a radiancy so full of shine
 That over me where wind-fires intertwine
It gleamed behind the billowy clouds updashed;
The very air a brilliancy that splashed
 In sudden silver dashes on the earth,
 With rippling mirth
Of humming insects, restless-winged and slow.
Oh, sense and scent of flowing warmth and sun!
 Oh, long, sweet-hearted, healthy, happy glow!

The shaggy earth, it drew me as a child.
 Its brown and laughing strength brought me
 the flush
Of sunburnt courage, while the thick sage-
 brush
Breathed me a tonic fragrance, warm and wild.
I wandered on. I caught the music mild
 Of crisping grass; and saw the thistles thrive,
 Their balls alive
With small bright tenants. Oh, I smiled to see
That sound of rustling skirt can startle so
 Some cocked-head gopher or some robber bee.

Afar, the red foot-hills. How clear, how clean
Their cameo-line that cuts the farther height
Of distant purple when the westering light
Casts her long spears of paling mauve and green ;
But in the morning lights those red hills lean
Unto the quivering brightness mistily.

And I could see
Upon the undulations of the high sky-line,
And where the shadows swing in dipping glens,
The darkening plumage of the fringing pine.

Oh, beautiful it was, and wild and free ;
Forever onward led the endless trail,
Forever swerving. So, too, shall avail
The spirit's glad impetuosity.
The prickly cactus found a word for me,
Preaching the independence of all strength.

I knew at length,
Pondering o'er daisies in the thirsty soil,
The wise forgetting, knew the deep content,
And the long quiet blessings of brown toil.

I HEARD THE SPIRIT SINGING

I heard the Spirit singing in the ancient cave of Work:

“ You are playing, Man-child, playing where the evil demons lurk;

Yet I would not have you falter nor count the awful cost,

Lest your heart grow old within you and the zest for sport be lost.

“ So toss the ball of empire with its fatal coat of fire;

And dig for gilded nuggets with the pangs of hot desire;

And blow your filmy bubbles in the bright face of the sun,

Though you know they'll tarnish, vanish ere playing-time is done.

“ Go, spin the humming-top of Thought; or brood with sullen lip,

As you scrawl upon the canvas or load the merchant ship;

Come, tell some old, old story, or rehearse some ancient creed;

Or with many a lisp of wonder draw the music from the reed.

“ Let your playful hand in cunning devise a giant eye,

And in long hours of frolic guess the secrets of the sky;

Or peer with curious longing in the busy under-bourne,

Where microscopic beings are sporting in their turn.

“And raise Love’s swaying ladder to the dizzy heights of woe,
And walk o’er desert places where the thorns and thistles grow,
Where the Man-child gropes and stumbles and holds his quivering breath,
As he meets within the shadows his last play-fellow, Death.”

And I heard the Spirit singing, “Laughter is the strongest prayer,
And the zest of faith is measured by the mirth that toys with care;
And he who plays the hardest, and dares to laugh aloud,
Beyond the cavern’s shadows may some day work with God.”



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